



## Good Schools & Parents Make Better City

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, June 01, 2009

When I ran for city council I was asked many times, "What are you going to do about the schools?" Unlike Chicago or New York, where the care of the schools falls under city government, San Jose has multiple school districts that have separate elected officials that are responsible for the care of the schools, making the City of San Jose and the school districts completely separate.

There are programs that the city may provide for the schools, such as the 50-year crossing guard program, but the actual policy making responsibility lies with the school districts' own elected boards, and the massive state education code.

Although the City and the school districts are separate entities, I believe that high-quality public schools equate to a more livable city. If kids are learning and active in a positive environment, then we all benefit. I have a unique experience in representing the area where I attended the public schools while growing up, the San Jose Unified School District. I enjoy attending and lending my support to school events.

I have attended numerous fundraisers at nearly every school in my district over the past two years. In addition, I have read books to elementary school students, attended school performing arts and sports events, assisted with student honor awards, participated in safe-routes-to-school programs, participated in recruitment for incoming kindergarten, 6th grade and freshmen students by encouraging them to select their local public schools, and on occasion, spoken to high school government classes.

This past week, I attended the opening of the new Theater Arts building at Trace Elementary. I found myself saying, "well when I was a kid we only had portable classrooms." The new building is beautiful and gives a great sense of pride to teachers, parents, students and the neighborhood.

Bond projects have built grand public facilities that are pleasing to the eye, and in the case of Trace, will provide a gathering area for residents to watch music and theater performed on an outside stage. A few months ago, I attended the opening of the new science building at Lincoln High. The building is impressive as it reminded me more of a community college than a high school with its grandeur. I also attended Freshman Welcome Night at Willow Glen High School and Booksin Family Fun Night last week. These events give parents an opportunity to meet the school administration and parent groups.

Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) are vital to the success of our schools. They raise money and do other tangible things. As a person who is not married and without children, it is hard for me to fathom how PTA parents work full time jobs, raise their kids and still have time to organize and put together events. I am in awe of the incredible work ethic I have witnessed within the PTA circles. My respect goes out to every PTA parent.

Do you have any comments about the role city government and/or elected city officials role in regards to our public schools?

In other business: My Budget Survey is still open but will be closing this week. More than 500 residents have taken the time to complete all 100 questions.

- 42 percent of the respondents have lived in San Jose for over 30 years.
- 64 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 64.
- 62 percent responded no to spending city budget reserves to avoid service reductions.
- 67 percent responded no to raising sales tax.
- 94 percent thought the recession was not over

The responses to the other 95 questions will be shared next week. Here is the survey link:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bRmrEkMutPaRNDzl3Q3GRQ\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bRmrEkMutPaRNDzl3Q3GRQ_3d_3d)

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